

Section VI

**Responsibility 4: Census of D.C.
Resident Minors**

VI. Census of D.C. Resident Minors

“Conduct of the census of all minors 3 years of age and older who are residents of the District, pursuant to Article II, § I of An Act To provide for compulsory school attendance, for the taking of a school census in the District of Columbia, and for other purposes.” State Education Office Establishment Act of 2000, Section 6(b)(4).

A. Background

1. Introduction

A study of the above responsibility was done to determine whether or not to transfer this function from the D.C. Board of Education to the State Education Office of the District of Columbia. (For purposes of this study, the term census is defined as it is in D.C. Law.) Under the current statute, D.C. Law 8-247, the Compulsory School Attendance Amendment Act of 1990, the census of minors is to be conducted by the D.C. Board of Education, or its designee, annually or as frequently as may be found necessary or desirable. The law provides for a complete census of all minors three years of age or more who permanently or temporarily reside in the District. The census record is to be amended from day to day as changes of residence occur among minors within the age group and as other persons within the age group become residents of or leave the District. Census records are to include the full name, address, sex, and date of birth of each minor, the school attended by the minor, and, if the minor is not enrolled in school, the name and address of his or her employer, if any, as well as the name, address, telephone number, if any, and the occupation of each parent or guardian.

The SEO has determined through research, interviews and meetings with stakeholders that neither the Board of Education nor the D.C. Public Schools, as its designee, conducts a census of all minors three years of age or older who are residents of the District of Columbia.

While D.C.PS conducts an official student enrollment count in the fall of each school year, this leaves obvious gaps in the data, if the intent is to have a complete census of minors. For example, among minors not included in the DCPS count are incarcerated juveniles, children ages three and four not yet enrolled in school, dropouts, and minors who are residents of the District of Columbia but who attend out-of-state schools.

In conducting the study, detailed information on current census requirements for DCPS and public charter schools in the District of Columbia was compiled and reviewed. Current and historic practices related to conducting a census in the District were researched. Offices responsible for meeting census requirements were identified and responsible staff interviewed. Criteria were established to identify relevant practices in other cities and states, and several options were explored in determining whether or not to recommend the assumption of responsibility for this function by the SEO.

2. Legislation and Legislative History

The original source of authority for conducting a census of minors three years of age or more was included in 1925 law (Feb.4, 1925, 43 Stat. 807, ch 140, Art II 1; 1973333 Ed., § 31-208; renumbered as Art. II, § 3 and amended, Mar. 8, 1991, D.C. Law 8-247, § 2(a), 38 DCR 376).

3. History

Neither the Board of Education nor the D.C. Public Schools, as its designee, has conducted a census of all minors three years of age or older who are D.C. residents. Local schools, both public and non-public, may provide data on numbers of students in certain reports, including enrollment counts, average daily attendance, and average daily membership; however, none of these reports meets the definition of census, since they are all school-based, excluding significant numbers and categories of minors.

4. Current Status

This section highlights the current status of efforts to count minors age three and up by the Office of Early Childhood Development, the State Data Center in the Office of Planning, the U.S. Bureau of the Census, and the current status of a bill to lower the mandatory school age from five to three.

Office of Early Childhood Development

The Department of Human Services' Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD) currently tracks childcare in the District of Columbia and focuses specifically on children from birth up to three years and older who are enrolled in childcare in the city. The OECD tracks the following:

- available licensed infant slots;
- number of childcare slots in child development centers for children up to 24 months, pre-school (2-4), and school age (4 years and older);
- children on waiting lists who are up to 24 months old, aged 2 to 2½; aged 2½ to 4, and aged 4 years and older;
- childcare requests to Resource and Referral, infants (0-24 months), pre-school (2-4 years) and school age (4 years and older); and
- children needing care, ages (0-3), (3-5), and (6-13).

Additionally, the OECD tracks D.C. childcare service characteristics such as the types of services offered by centers (i.e., full- or part-time care, after-school care, non-traditional hours, and care for children with disabilities) and the types of providers (i.e., non-profit or for-profit, employer/corporate, private school or government agency).

D.C. Data Center

The U.S. Bureau of the Census, in partnership with each state, provides data through a State Data Center program. The D.C. Data Center is the lead agency in the District of Columbia for demographic reports and socio-economic data from the decennial census and from more recent intercensal updates. (Updates are obtained from the Bureau of the Census and from private sources of demographic data.) The Center also collects school enrollment and population data for the District of Columbia.

U.S. Bureau of the Census

The census of population and housing that takes place every 10 years is the road map that helps government agencies to make multiple decisions, such as where to put new roads and schools. Thousands of large and small community-based organizations also use census information to gauge the need for human services and to match the unemployed with jobs (see Appendix F).

In an effort to keep the community's understanding of local needs and resources up to date, the Census Bureau is designing the American Community Survey (ACS), which eventually will replace the decennial census long form. It is anticipated that every year the ACS will produce useful demographic and socioeconomic information for every state in the nation, as well as every city, county, town, or population group of 65,000 people or more (see Appendix F).

Lowering the Mandatory School Age

There are plans to introduce a bill in the Council of the District of Columbia that would lower from five to three the age at which schooling is required. If legislation is passed, the District of Columbia would be the first jurisdiction in the country to mandate school attendance or home schooling for all children at such a young age, according to the U.S. Department of Education (Source: *The Washington Post*, June 19, 2001; see Appendix F).

B. Description of Practices in Other States

In preparation for making a recommendation as to whether the responsibility for conducting a census of all minors three years of age and older who are D.C. residents should be transferred to the SEO, a survey of practices in other city and state agencies was conducted. The city agencies surveyed and their counterparts at the state level were Atlanta, Georgia, Baltimore, Maryland, Austin, Texas, Seattle, Washington, and Boston, Massachusetts. The survey was conducted via telephone and city and state agency websites. The purpose of the survey was to find out whether or not local and/or state jurisdictions conducted a census of all minors age three and older.

In summary, the SEO found that among those cities and states surveyed, no local nor state agencies conducted the type of census envisioned in current D.C. law. Most agencies use data from the decennial census conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census to make their own projections, forecasts, and estimates.

Atlanta, Georgia

In Atlanta, Georgia, the Atlanta Bureau of Planning (ABOP) provides information and advice to the Mayor, to the City Council, and other city officials in order to assist them in making decisions about the growth and development of the city. The ABOP is responsible for the creation and preparation of the Comprehensive Development Plan, which identifies the city's needs and policies, while recommending future projects for implementation. The ABOP plays a large role in the rezoning process and neighborhood planning through its divisions of Comprehensive Planning, Development Review, Redevelopment Planning, and Current Planning. The ABOP projects population growth by analyzing the listing of residential building permits and land-use development. The local government office does not conduct a census of minors.

At the state level, the Georgia Institute of Technology's State Data and Research Center is responsible for conducting the census count for the state of Georgia in partnership with the U.S. Bureau of the Census. All Georgia census information, such as Census 2000 in Georgia, Demographic Characteristics Profiles (including sex and selected age data by county and city), Census Data for 1990, and U.S. Census Bureau Links is provided by this office.

Baltimore, Maryland

In Baltimore, Maryland, the Department of Planning (DOP), in concert with the Planning Commission, guides the development of Baltimore City. The DOP has established six planning divisions to help it carry out its mission: Capital Improvement Planning, Community Planning, Current Planning, Strategic Planning, Transportation Planning, and Urban Design. The DOP does not conduct a census of minors.

At the state level, the Maryland Department of Planning's (MDP) State Data Center is responsible for compiling and supplying census data for the state of Maryland in partnership with the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Sample profiles of census data, historic trends, and forecasts are available at MDP's State Data Center. Other key items include the combination of historical and projected data that have proven to be valuable planning and marketing tools. The State Data Center makes projections related to population, race, age, households, labor force, jobs, income, and school enrollment.

Austin, Texas

In Austin, Texas, the Planning Division of the City of Austin Planning, Environmental and Conservation Services Department does regional and local demographic estimates, certain

geographic information system (GIS) development and feature coverage for spatial analysis, general long-range travel demand forecasts, coordination of municipal utility district (MUD) development, special projects, including downtown and economic development, jurisdiction coordination, and regional strategic planning. Population growth for Austin is determined by land-use information collected every five years and building permits information collected quarterly. The Planning Division of the City of Austin does not conduct a census of minors.

At the state level, the Texas State Data Center (TSDC) was initiated in 1980 to establish a state-level liaison to the U.S. Bureau of the Census for better dissemination of Texas census data. In the mid-1980s this program was expanded to meet a demand for more timely population estimates and projections for intercensal years. The TSDC is organized to obtain both the data provided by the Census Bureau for Texas and the estimates and projections generated by the TSDC through a network of 37 organizations across the state affiliated with the TSDC program. There are four core agencies, eight state affiliates, and 25 local affiliates.

The TSDC provides population estimates and projections, demographic and socio-economic research data, education information and Federal and state government data.

Seattle, Washington

In Seattle, Washington, the Strategic Planning Office (SPO) in the city of Seattle is responsible for providing population and demographic information for Seattle. The SPO updates census-related demographic and geographic data, reports, and other information. The key items analyzed include demographic profiles, population size and growth, characteristics of population, ethnicity, and age. The SPO uses employment statistics, new housing units, and household size to project the growth for the city of Seattle. The SPO in the city of Seattle does not conduct a census of minors.

At the state level, the Office of Financial Management (OFM) for the State of Washington Population, Economy and Research provides the executive branch, the legislature, and the public with estimates, forecasts, and reports on the state's population, demographic characteristics, economy, and state revenues. The data and analyses are used by the state's executive branch and the legislature in the development of the state budget and other planning functions. Other public and private organizations rely on data developed and maintained by the OFM for planning and assessment purposes. The OFM also serves as a liaison with the U.S. Bureau of the Census and with the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Boston, Massachusetts

In Boston, Massachusetts, the Boston Redevelopment Authority, Planning and Economic Development Agency's Policy Development and Research (PDR) office is responsible for providing population and demographic information for the city of Boston. The PDR office collects census data for 157 census tracts in the city of Boston. The census data includes demographic and geographic data, reports, and publications. The key variables analyzed

include demographic profiles, population size and growth, characteristics of population, ethnicity, and age. The city of Boston conducts a census of minors 18 years and under every ten years.

At the state level, the State Data Center function is carried out by the Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research (MISER), located at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. MISER has an extensive collection of census data on population, housing, education, business, manufacturing, trade, services, government, and agriculture in Massachusetts, New England and the United States.

C. Statement of Options

Option One: The SEO assumes responsibility for conducting a census of all minors three years of age or older who are residents of the District of Columbia.

Discussion: This option assumes that the SEO will meet requirements for conducting a census of all D.C. resident minors three years of age or older through an outside contractor.

Advantages:

There are no compelling advantages to be gained by assumption of this function by the SEO.

Disadvantage:

- This function requires a scope of responsibility that is well beyond that of a state education agency.

Option Two: The SEO, in coordination with the Office of Planning's D.C. Data Center, would manage this function.

Discussion: This option assumes that the D.C. Data Center will incorporate an annual census into its portfolio of data collection activities.

Advantage:

- This would build upon the current work and capacities of the D.C. Data Center, which serves as the lead agency collecting and analyzing all D.C. census data.

Disadvantage:

- Neither agency currently has the capacity or the resources to conduct the type of census and related work required by present law.

Option Three: The SEO would provide leadership for a multi-agency initiative, including the D.C. Board of Education, D.C. Public Schools, Department of Health’s State Center for Health Statistics, Office of Early Childhood Development, D.C. Data Center, and the Department of Children, Youth and Families, to develop a strategy for meeting the statutory requirements for a census of minors ages three years and up. A key element of the strategy would be the identification of the D.C. government agency or office that would have lead responsibility for conducting the census of minors.

Discussion: This option assumes that the SEO would provide leadership and requisite management of intergovernmental collaboration, and that other agencies would be willing participants.

Advantages:

- The census strategy would be developed by the multi-agency representatives, based on their experiences and perspectives.
- Assumption of this responsibility would provide an opportunity for the SEO, in collaboration with other agencies, to make data available to support citywide planning in several important areas, including education.

Disadvantage:

- The complexity of the work would exacerbate the already difficult task of managing the collaborative efforts of several agencies.

D. Recommendation and Rationale

Recommendation

SEO recommends Option Three, which provides for the SEO to provide leadership for a multi-agency initiative, including the D.C. Board of Education, D.C. Public Schools, Department of Health’s State Center for Health Statistics, Office of Early Childhood Development, D.C. Data Center, and the Department of Children, Youth and Families, to develop a strategy for meeting the statutory requirements for a census of minors ages three years and up.

Rationale

The magnitude and complexity of this function, as described in the statute, would severely challenge the capacities of a newly established State Education Office. A multi-agency planning initiative would ensure the design of a strategy that would incorporate the

experiences and perspectives of the diverse array of city agencies and offices for which the data would be useful. It is also anticipated that an important result of this multi-agency initiative would be the designation of an appropriate lead agency for conducting the census of minors.

E Application of Decision Criteria

1. Consistency With the Vision and Mission of the SEO

Leadership of the multi-agency planning initiative would be consistent with the SEO's mission to enhance the management and efficiency of state-level education functions and to ensure the equitable distribution of resources for the education of students District-wide.

2. Effect on the Transferring Agency

There would be no effect, since a census of all minors, as described in the statute, is not being conducted by any D.C. government agency or office at the present time.

3. Effect on the Quality of Educational and Other Services to Children and Adults

This cannot be determined until a feasibility study is completed.

4. Potential for Duplication of Functions

There would be little or no duplication of functions since a census of all minors, as described in the statute, is not being conducted by any D.C. government agency or office at the present time.

5. Effect on Reporting Requirements

Although SEO leadership of a multi-agency planning initiative should have little, if any, effect on current reporting requirements, DCPS involvement and that of other agencies might require that they prepare some written documents.

6. Potential for Conflict of Interest

There would be little, if any, conflicts of interest, since a census of all minors, as described in the statute, is not being carried out by any D.C. government agency or office at the present time.

7. Effect on Cost

There may be costs associated with a feasibility study. It should be noted, however, that costs associated with a census, such as that described in current law, and the design and development of systems to maintain currency of the data could be prohibitive.

F. Transition Plan for Assumption of the Function

It should be noted that the SEO is not recommending that it assume responsibility for conducting a census of all minors three years of age and older who are residents of the District of Columbia. Instead, the SEO recommends that it be charged with the responsibility of providing leadership to a multi-agency planning group that would design a strategy for conducting the required census.

1. Authority and Responsibility of Each Party at Each Stage of the Transition

Authority: The State Education Office (SEO) Establishment Act of 2000 provides for the study of and the development of a recommendation as to whether the SEO would have responsibility and authority to conduct the census of all minors three years of age and older who are residents of the District, pursuant to Article II, § I of An Act To provide for compulsory school attendance, for the taking of a school census in the District of Columbia, and for other purposes.

Leadership: Leadership of a multi-agency planning initiative would reside with the SEO, which would be expected to

- convene multi-agency planning meetings;
- conduct feasibility studies;
- manage and provide leadership to issue-specific work groups representing a range of perspectives to identify and consider alternative ways to meet statutory requirements for a census of all minors three years of age and older; and
- prepare technical and summary reports.

2. Dates and Benchmarks for Assumption of Authority, Responsibility, Budget, and Employees

The first task facing the multi-agency planning group would be the development of a work plan with timelines and costs. It is expected that the final report from this group would include recommendations for a lead agency, a clearly defined set of responsibilities consistent with statutory intent, a proposed first-year budget with indications of out-year costs, recommended sources of revenue, and staffing estimates.

3. Estimated Cost to the SEO for Assumption and Management of the Function and Recommended Source(s) of Revenue

See number 2, above.

4. Factors With Potential for Disrupting Services to Students and Recommended Steps to Prevent Disruption

There would be no disruption of services to students.